

Claims

1. (currently amended) ~~Panel A~~ panel (1) having connecting means (3, 4, 7, 9)

which permit a positive connection with a further panel (2),

- panel (1) comprises as connecting means laterally a groove (3) formed by two rigid flanks,
- one of the two rigid flanks (6) is longer than the other one,
- the longer rigid flank (6) comprises a recess (7),
- the other panel comprises laterally a tongue (4),
- the tongue (4) comprises on an under- or top side lug a plurality of lugs (9), each lug exhibiting a spacing from an adjacent lug,
- the lugs (9) and the recess (7) are so arranged that the lugs (9) ~~is~~ are able to engage with the recess (7); and
~~characterized in that~~

the side of the tongue comprising the lug comprises a recess in particular in the form of a slope (12), so that when the two panels are in the joined state, there remains, as a result of the recess formed in particular by a slope (12), an interval between the side of the tongue (4) comprising the lug (9) and the longer rigid flank (6), so that the open end of the tongue does not touch the rigid flank (6) when the two panels are joined.

2. (currently amended) ~~Panel A~~ panel according to ~~the preceding claim 1~~, in which the lug (9) reaches to the bottom of the ~~raecess~~ (7) in the engaged state or the raised

area (19) at the open end of the flank (6) extends to the end of the recess (20) which is formed by the lug (9) on the underside of the associated panel.

3. (currently amended) ~~Panel A panel~~ according to ~~the preceding~~ claim 2, in which the side of the tongue (4) which comprises the lug (9) as the result of the provision of a recess does not touch the flank (6) in the interior of the groove (3) when the panels are joined, so that an interval (17) remains.

4. (currently amended) ~~Panel A panel~~ according to ~~the preceding~~ claim 3, in which the lug (9) makes contact with the side wall of the recess (7), through which connection between the two panels (1, 2) is effected.

5. (currently amended) ~~Panel A panel~~ according to ~~the preceding~~ claim 1, in which the recess is present as a channel.

6. (currently amended) ~~Panel A panel~~ according to ~~the preceding~~ claim 1, in which the tongue (4) is separated from the longer rigid flank (6) from the lug (9) up to the slope (12) by a gap (17).

7. (currently amended) ~~Panel A panel~~ according to ~~the preceding~~ claim 1, in which a plurality of lugs (9) is provided on a longitudinal side or on a transverse side of a panel (2), wherein each lug (9) exhibits a spacing from an adjacent lug (9).

8. (currently amended) ~~Panel~~ A panel according to ~~the preceding~~ claim 1, in which the lugs (9) project substantially perpendicular to the surface (10) of the panel.

9. (currently amended) ~~Panel~~ A panel according to ~~the preceding~~ claim 1, in which tongue (4), grooves (3), recesses (7) and lugs (9) are so provided that the positive connection is produced by a tongue being twisted into a groove.

10. (currently amended) ~~Panel~~ A panel according to ~~the preceding~~ claim 1, in which tongues (4), grooves (3), channels (7) and lugs (9) are so dimensioned that intervals or gaps (13) remain between the open end of a tongue (4) and a groove (3) of panels connected to one another, so that a tongue (4) may be twisted into a groove (3).

11. (currently amended) ~~Panel~~ A panel according to ~~the preceding~~ claim 1, in which lugs (9) are distributed uniformly along a longitudinal side or a transverse side.

12. (currently amended) ~~Panel~~ A panel according to ~~the preceding~~ claim 1, in which the distance between two lugs (9) corresponds roughly to the length of a lug along a longitudinal side or transverse side.

13. (currently amended) ~~Panel~~ A panel according to ~~the preceding~~ claim 1, in which the transition from a top edge of a lug (9) to a top edge of an adjacent lug (9) is a circular in shape.

14. (currently amended) ~~Panel~~ A panel according to ~~the preceding~~ claim 1, in which at least one tongue (4) comprises a slope on its top side, so that the tongue tapers towards the open end.

15. (currently amended) ~~Panel~~ A panel according to ~~the preceding~~ claim 1, in which a groove (3) comprises a slope (14) in an outward direction on its top side, so that in this way a gap remains between the tongue and the groove in the joined state.

16. (currently amended) ~~Panel~~ A panel according to ~~the preceding~~ claim 1, in which on the short transverse side of a panel (1) at least one elastic flank (6) is provided.

17. (currently amended) ~~Panel~~ A panel according to ~~the preceding~~ claim 1, in which the flanks of the groove (3) are substantially of equal length on the short transverse side.

18. (currently amended) ~~Method~~ A method for the loosening of two panels (1, 2), each panel (1) having connecting means (3, 4, 7, 9) which permit a positive connection with a further panel (2).

- panel (1) comprises as connecting means laterally a groove (3) formed by two rigid flanks,
- one of the two rigid flanks (6) is longer than the other one,
- the longer rigid flank (6) comprises a recess (7),
- the other panel comprises laterally a tongue (4),
- the tongue (4) comprises on an under- or top side lug a plurality of lugs (9), each lug exhibiting a spacing from an adjacent lug,
- the lugs (9) and the recess (7) are so arranged that the lugs (9) is are able to engage with the recess (7); and

the side of the tongue comprising the lug comprises a recess in particular in the form of a slope (12), so that when the two panels are in the joined state, there remains, as a result of the recess formed in particular by a slope (12), an interval between the side of the tongue (4) comprising the lug (9) and the longer rigid flank (6), so that the open end of the tongue does not touch the rigid flank (6) when the two panels are joined, said panels (1,2) connected positively to one another on the short transverse sides, characterized in that a the panel (1) is displaced along the connecting joint (5) until said panel (1) is loosened from the other panel (2).